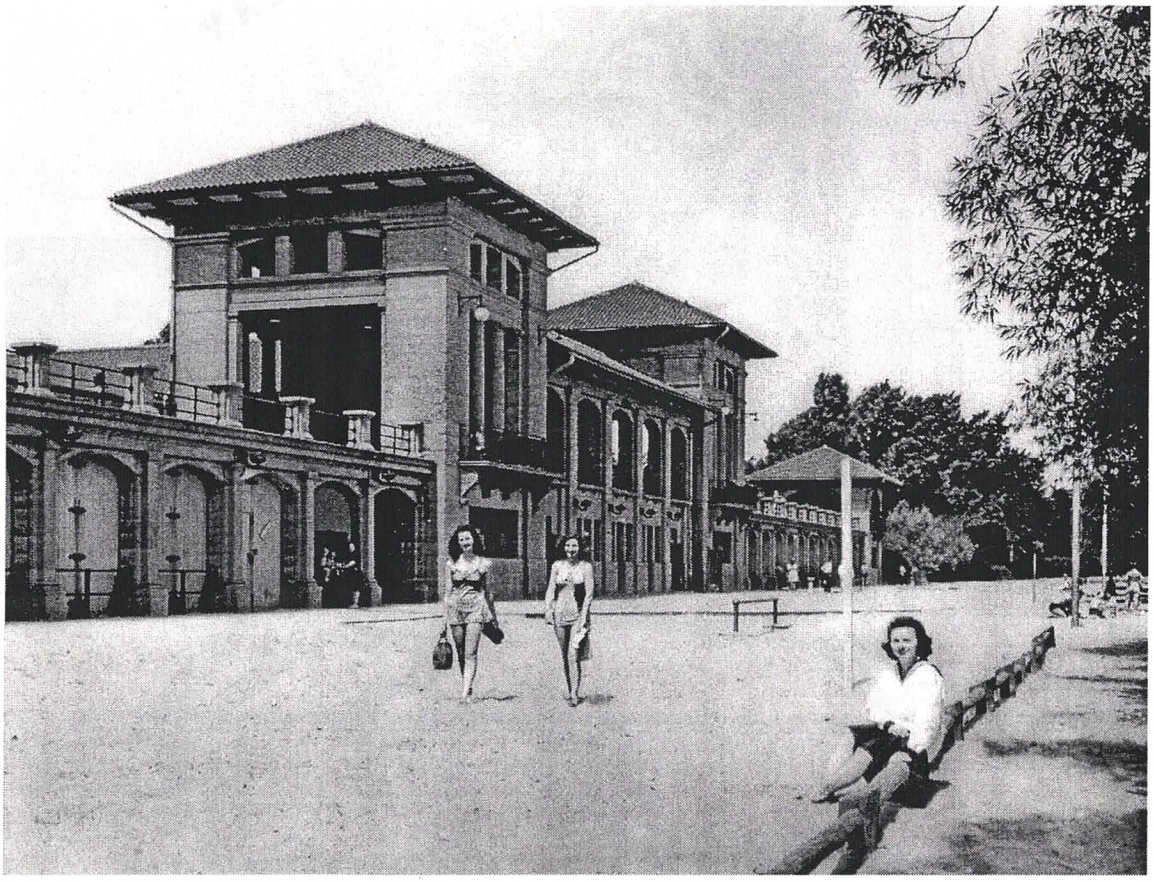
LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



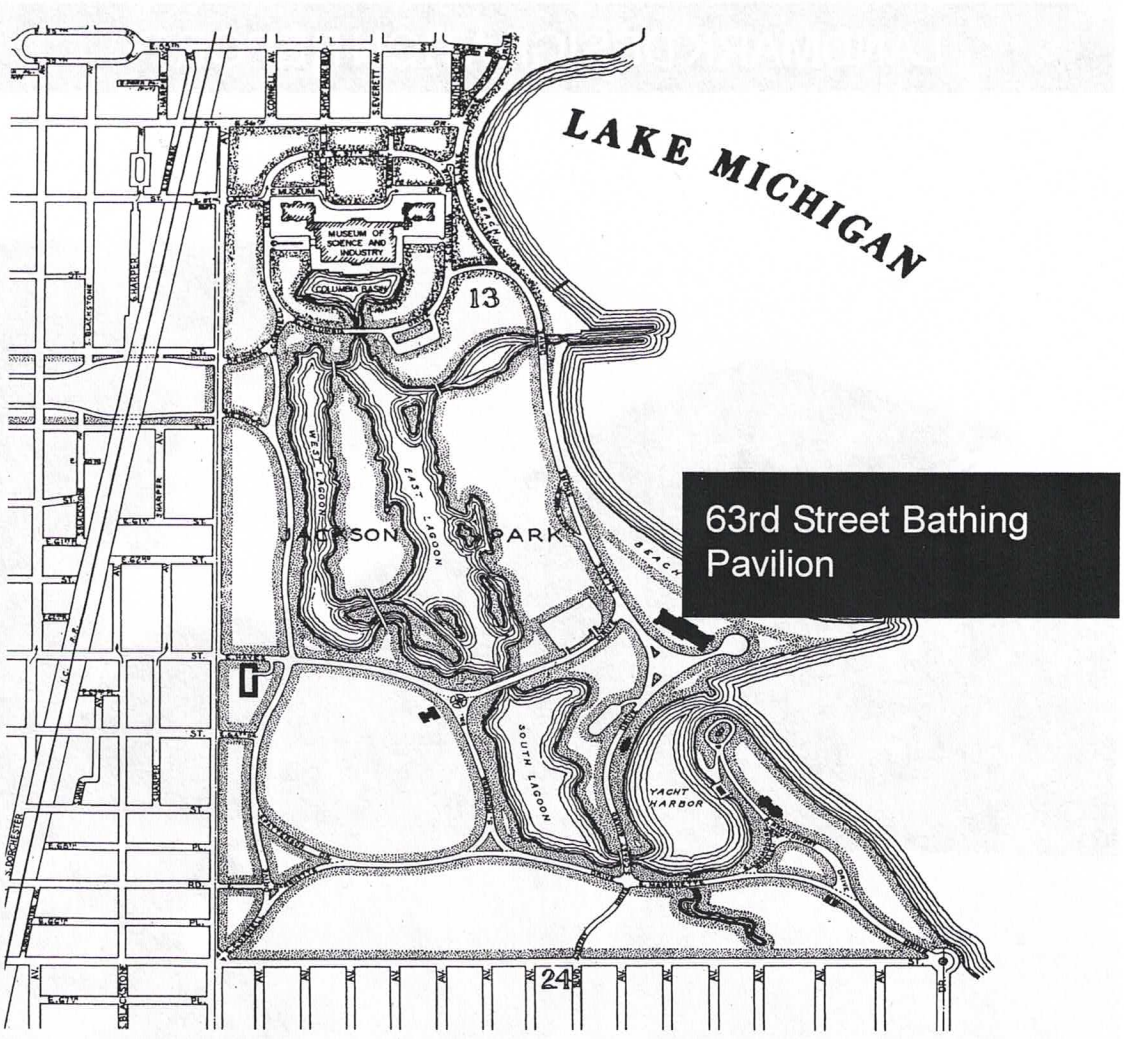
63rd Street Bathing Pavilion

South Lake Shore Drive and (approximately) 63rd St.

Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, June 2004

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Denise M. Casalino, P.E., Commissioner



Above: The 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion is located at South Lake Shore Drive and approximately 63rd Street in Jackson Park.

Cover: The bathing pavilion as it appeared in the 1940s.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

63RD STREET BATHING PAVILION

SOUTH LAKE SHORE DRIVE AND (APPROXIMATELY) 63RD STREET

BUILT: 1919

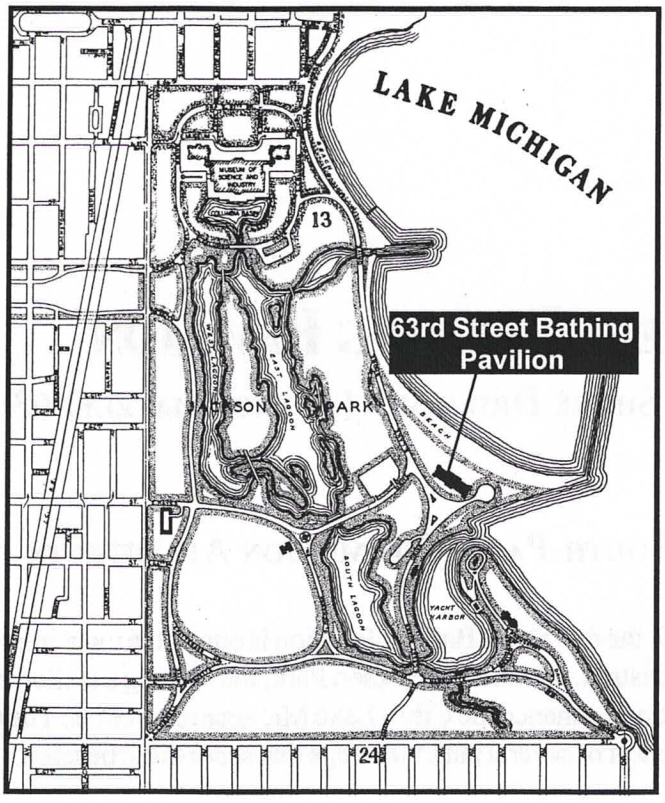
ARCHITECT: SOUTH PARK COMMISSION ARCHITECTS

Completed in 1919, the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion is one of the most impressive buildings in the Chicago Park District. Located in Jackson Park, the bathing pavilion overlooks one of the beaches that define and enhance the City's Lake Michigan shoreline. The 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion is the grandest of several park buildings that serve these beaches.

The bathing pavilion was designed by the South Park Commission's in-house architects and was modeled on the design of many buildings of this type designed by the D. H. Burnham and Company, whose designs for South Side park buildings such as the Sherman Park Fieldhouse established the visual character of Chicago's South Side parks. The building is largely Classical in design, following the favored architectural style of the South Park Commission in the early decades of the 20th century. With its commanding presence on one of Chicago's largest beaches, the beach house stands as a visual landmark on Chicago's Lake Michigan shoreline, especially following its recent restoration.

PARK DEVELOPMENT IN CHICAGO

Park development in Chicago displays a rich variety of traditions. In the first half of the nineteenth century, in an effort to provide a physical amenity for newly platted residential neighborhoods and to encourage sales, Chicago real estate developers set aside small tracts of land for parks in several neighborhoods intended for upper-income houses. The first of these parks, Washington Square, was given to the City in 1842 by the American Land Company, which was subdividing the surrounding Near North Side area. Other parks acquired in the next 30 years by the City through gifts of land from developers included Union Park and Vernon Park on Chicago's West Side and Ellis Park on the city's South Side. These parks were relatively modest in size and intended for strolling and passive recreation by nearby residents. In overall form and use they resembled small residential parks or "squares" found both in European cities as well in older American cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, and New York.



Top: The 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion is located in Jackson Park in the Woodlawn community area. Bottom: The bathing pavilion's dramatic facade as seen from its beach side.

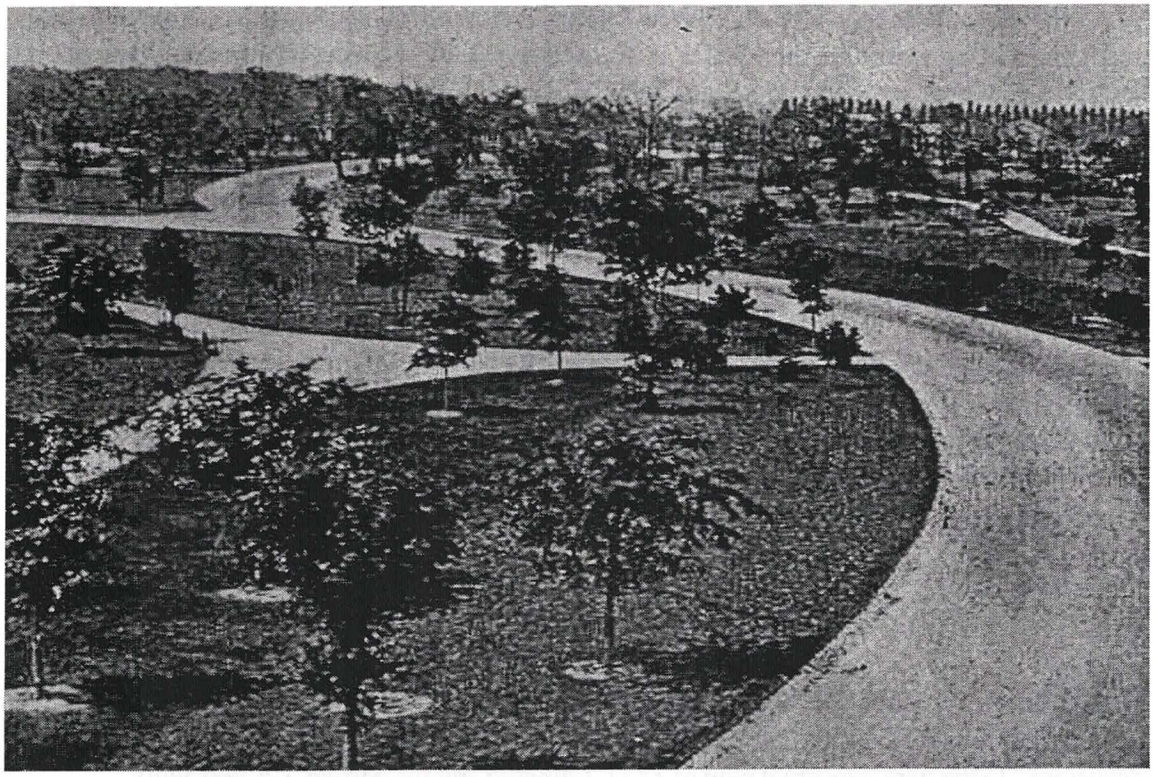
The value of parks as enhancements to real estate development and civic life continued to be recognized in the years after the Civil War. In 1869 the Illinois state legislature established three new governmental agencies—the South Park, West Park, and Lincoln Park Commissions—to oversee the development and maintenance of new parks in Chicago and neighboring suburban townships. The creation of these commissions brought about the enhancement of the already created Lincoln Park on the city's north lakefront and the creation of five additional large parks, connected by landscaped boulevards, on the city's West and South sides. These parks—Lincoln, Humboldt, Garfield, Douglas, Washington, and Jackson Parks—were designed as large-scale "pastoral" landscapes of picturesque meadows, encircling woodlands, curvilinear ponds and meandering bridal paths. They were meant to both encourage nearby real estate development and to provide recreational opportunities for people living throughout the Chicago area. Their designs were influenced by the naturalistic English landscape tradition of the 18th century and the mid-19th-century development of large, park-like cemeteries such as Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery and Chicago's Graceland Cemetery.

History of Jackson Park

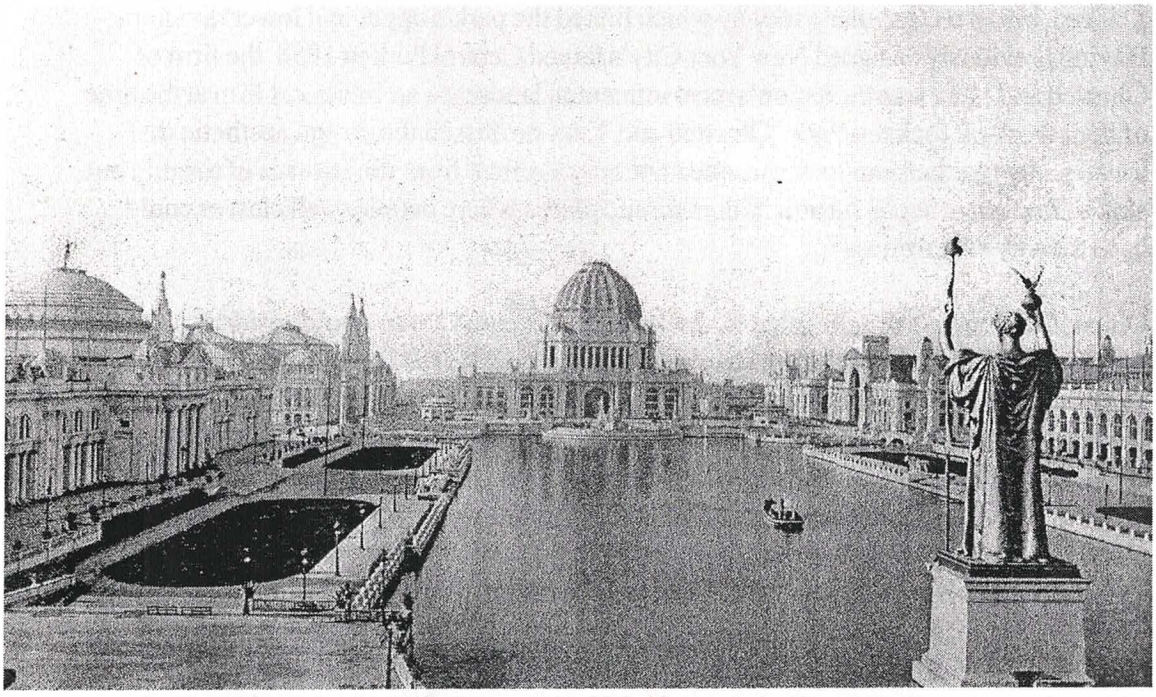
One of the crown jewels in Chicago's necklace of large public parks, Jackson Park was designed by famed landscape designer Frederick Law Olmstead on three different occasions. In the park's original plan of 1871, Olmsted and his partner, Calvert Vaux, conceived the park as the eastern division of a grand 1,055-acre landscape originally known as South Park. South Park in its entirety was originally composed of an upper division (Washington Park), a lower division (Jackson Park), and the Midway Plaisance, a closed, broad rectangular parkway which linked the park's upper and lower divisions. Having previously designed New York City's famed Central Park in 1858, the firm of Olmsted and Vaux was the nation's most influential landscape architectural firm at the time of their work on Jackson Park. Olmsted and Vaux professed the design aesthetic that urban parks like Jackson Park provided not only a refuge from the stresses of the city but also an important social benefit as democratic places where people of all classes could have friendly interactions.

Olmsted and Vaux's original plan for Jackson Park, named in honor of President Andrew Jackson in 1880, included an intricate network of lagoons, islands and glades. Stylistically, park's original design reflected Olmsted's preference for the "beautiful" or the "pastoral" in landscape design. The pastoral, Olmsted's highly personal style, is characterized by informal yet smoothly designed spaces, and groupings and massing of trees surrounding broad meadows and smaller "bays of space." The Olmsted and Vaux plan for Jackson Park was completed in 1871; however, its implementation was slowed by the destruction of the South Park Commission administrative offices during the Great Chicago Fire, which destroyed many of the Commission's park plans.

Although most of adjoining Washington Park had been transformed into an improved landscape, by the late 1880s only the northernmost part of Jackson Park's marshy site had been developed into parkland. After a local committee secured Chicago as the site



An early view of Jackson Park taken shortly after its development, showing how Olmsted's plans called for grading and leveling, with shrubbery placed in a planned landscape.



The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, held in Jackson Park, was responsible for establishing Classical architecture as the preferred architectural style for commercial and municipal institutions throughout the first decades of the 20th century.

for a major World's Fair in 1890, Olmstead was asked to help select the fair's location. Stressing the importance of views of Lake Michigan as the fairground's backdrop, and noting the unfinished state of Jackson Park, he suggested this as the site for the World's Columbian Exposition. Along with renowned architects Daniel H. Burnham and John Wellborn Root, Olmsted and his assistant, Henry Codman, planned a gleaming campus of monumental classical buildings set in a landscape of interconnected lagoons, orientated around the formal Court of Honor Basin. As a naturalistic refuge from the formality of the fair, Olmsted re-shaped a sandy peninsula with tremendous native oak trees into Wooded Island, allowing only one structure, a Ho-o-den, Japan's pavilion.

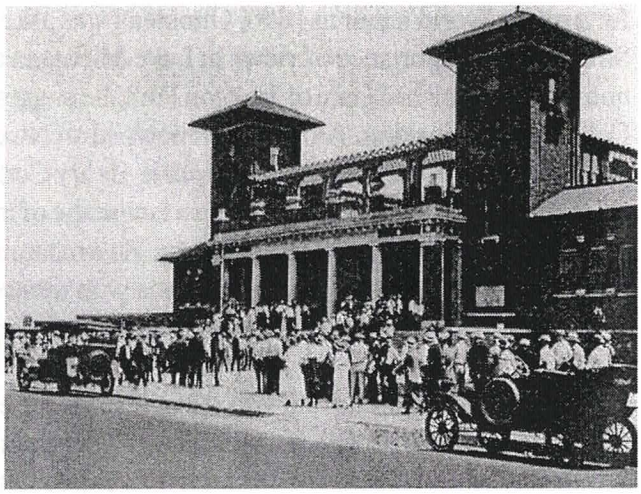
During the six months the fair was open in 1893, the exposition dazzled more than 27 million visitors and became a major social achievement, equating the ideal of social democracy with classical architecture. The exposition was also responsible for the advent of the City Beautiful Movement in architecture and urban planning, which proliferated across the nation during the early decades of the 20th century. Never intended to be permanent, a series of fires destroyed many of the fair's buildings soon after it closed, and most of its other structures were thereafter razed.

In 1895 Olmsted's firm, then Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot, began implementing plans to return the site of the fair in Jackson Park into parkland. Remaining true to the original plan, this scheme consisted of an interconnected system of serene lagoons with lushly planted shores, islands and peninsulas. It also temporarily retained the fair's Fine Arts Building as the Field Museum of Natural History. In 1899, the South Park Commissioners decided to install the Midwest's first public golf course in the park. During the early 1930s, the Fine Arts Palace from the 1983 fair was rehabilitated and converted into the Museum of Science and Industry. Its opening in 1933 coincided with Chicago's second world's fair, A Century of Progress, in nearby Burnham Park.

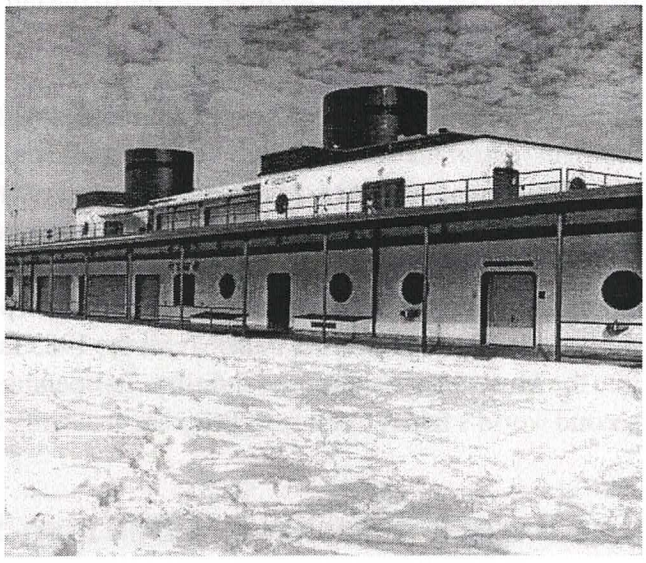
The Bathing Pavilion as a Building Type

The late 19th century witnessed a great increase in the popularity of sporting and recreation activities in the United States, among them swimming. Beaches such as those at New York City's Coney Island, New Jersey's Atlantic City, and Texas's Galveston, as well as scores of other smaller waterfronts, grew greatly in popularity. To provide swimmers and bathers with changing and rest rooms and other facilities, a new building type—the bathing pavilion—came into being. Often designed in grand or up-to-date architectural styles and featuring a variety of amenities, bathing pavilions were typically symbols of municipal pride, permitting easy and attractive access to beachfront activities for the nation's growing population.

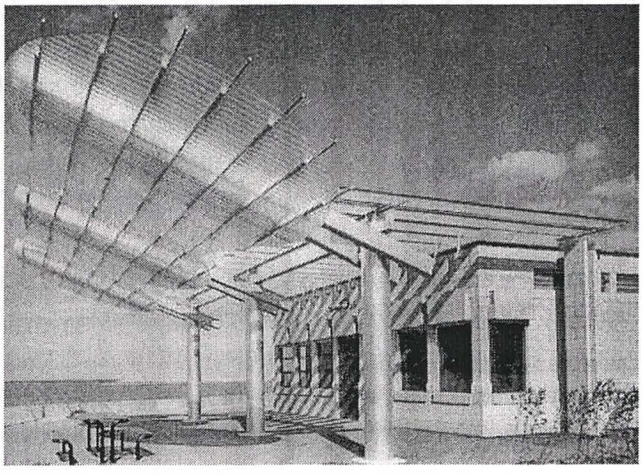
In 1905, the City of Chicago's Special Park Commission took over management of municipal beaches. Several years later the Commission began planning a state-of-the-art bathing pavilion, visiting well-known beaches throughout the nation in search of an appropriate model. In 1916 the City opened the Clarendon Municipal Beach which featured, like the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion completed three years later, an impressive bath house with two stately towers and



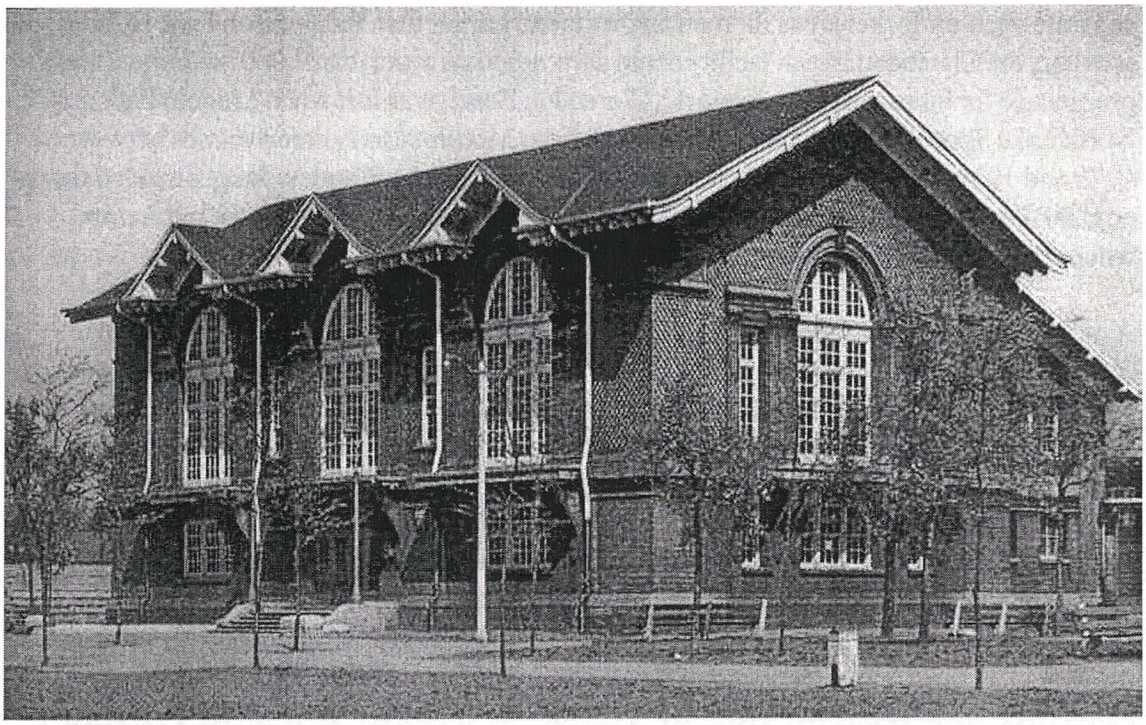
Constructed in 1916, the Clarendon Bathing Pavilion in Lincoln Park was Chicago's first bath house. Like the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion completed three years later, it featured separate open-air lockers for men and women. Today the building serves as the Clarendon Community Center, although it has been greatly altered.



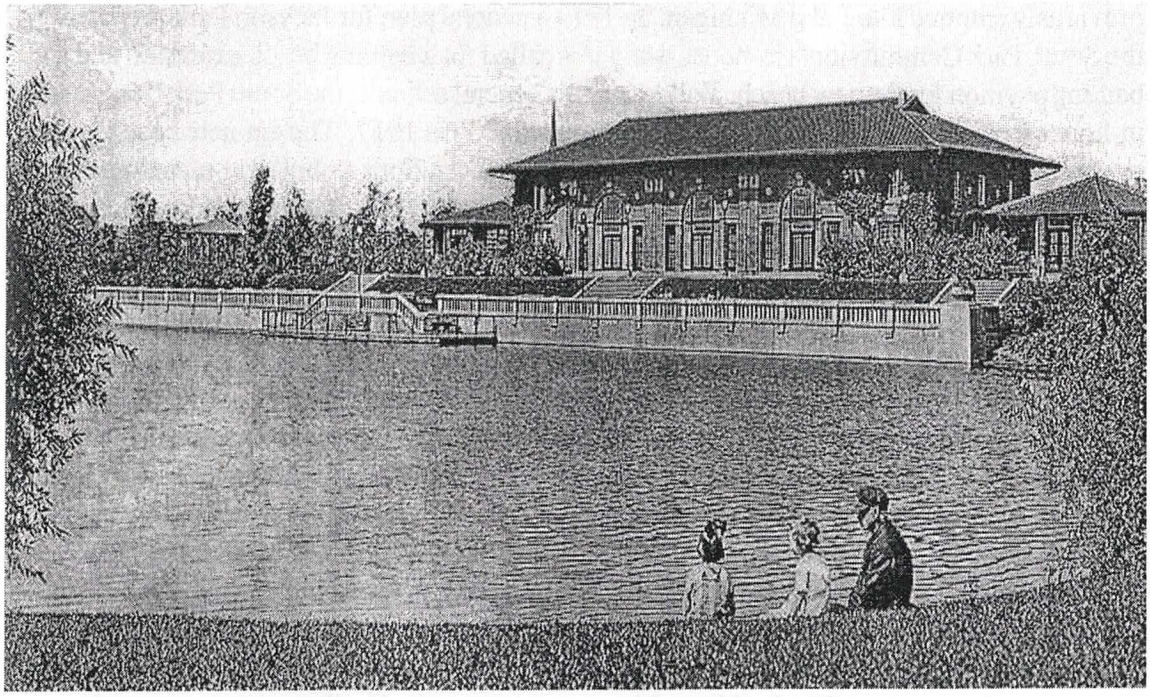
This 1999 nautically-inspired beach house at at the North Avenue Beach replaced a very similar steamship-like building constructed in 1939.



The continuing evolution of the beach house can be seen in this 2000 example at the Rainbow Beach which features translucent oval canopies suggestive of clouds.



The Classically inspired architecture of buildings like the 1910 Fuller Park Fieldhouse by the D. H. Burnham and Company was the inspiration for the design of the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion.



The Classical architecture of the 1905 Sherman Park Fieldhouse by the D. H. Burnham and Company relects the South Park Commission's adherence to Classical architecture in many of its buildings.

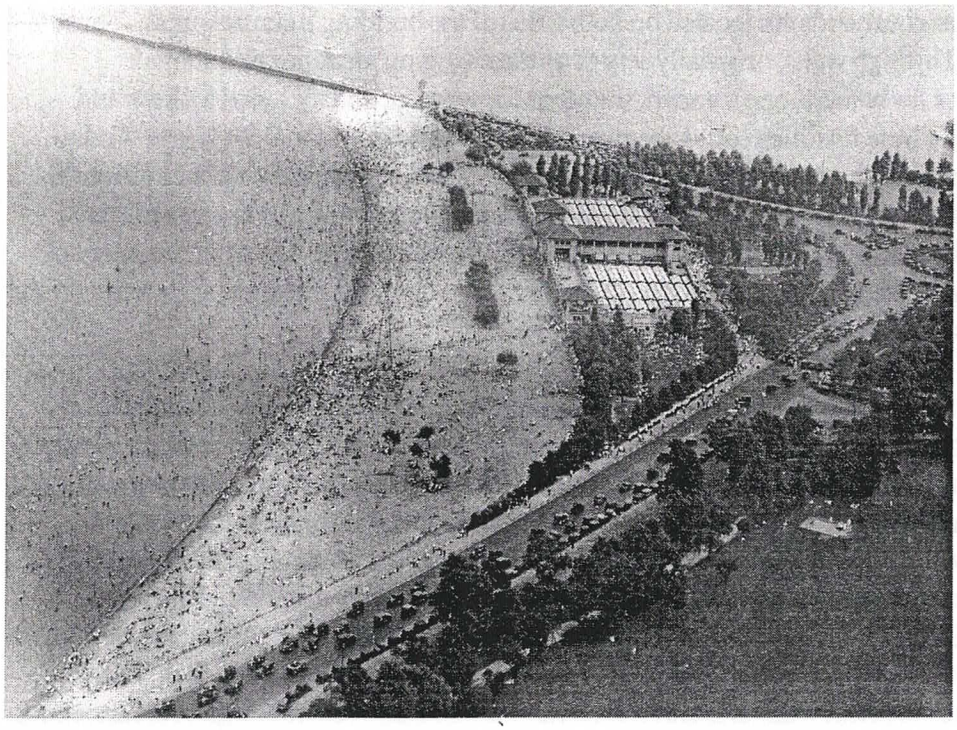
separate open-air locker areas for men and women. Larger than the Jackson Park bathing pavilion, the Clarendon Beach facility could accommodate more than 9,000 swimmers and a promenade for thousands of spectators. (Clarendon Beach was lost when Lincoln Park and North Lake Shore Drive were expanded north from Montrose to Foster Avenues between 1929 and 1939. Cut off from access to the Lake Michigan shore and no longer needed for its original function, the Clarendon Bathing Pavilion still survives, although much modified and without its original towers, as the Clarendon Community Center.)

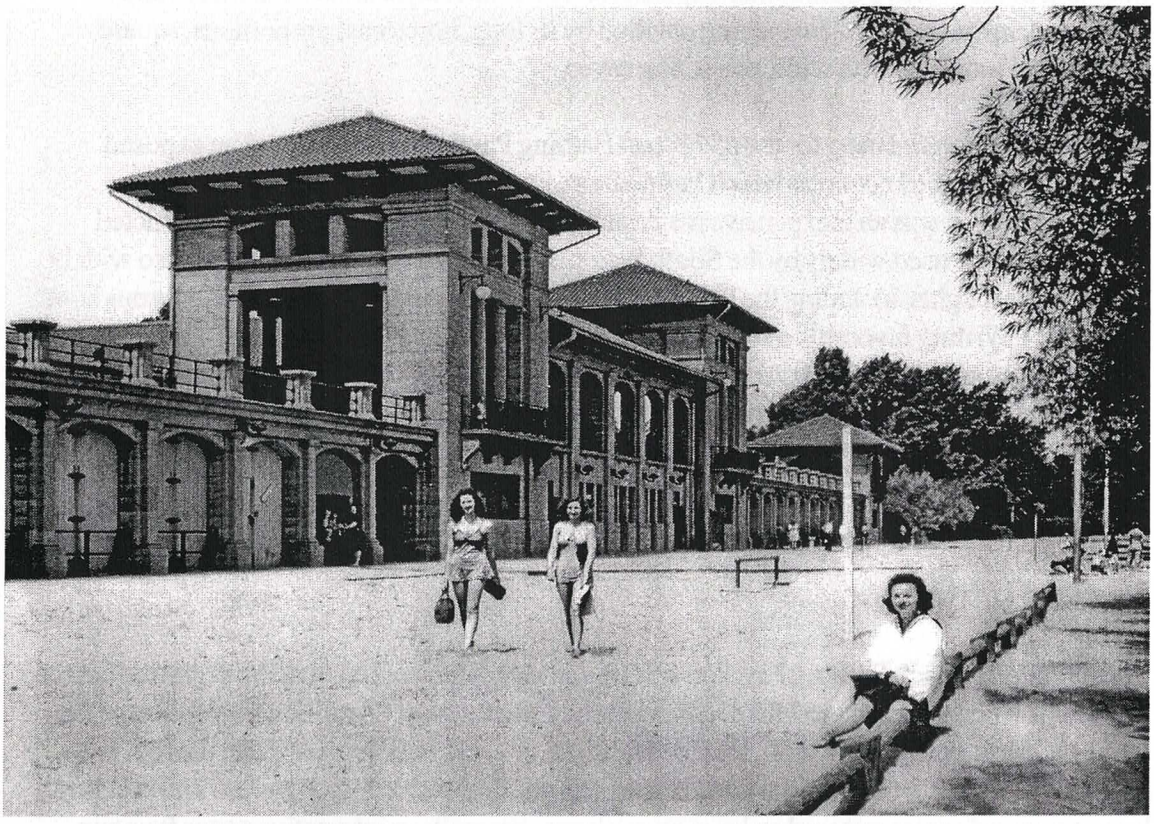
A much smaller but very whimsical beach house designed in a strongly nautical style was constructed in 1939 at the North Avenue Beach. This steamship-like building featured two elliptical "smokestacks," porthole windows, and other nautical details. When this building had deteriorated to the point of needing replacement, a new more durable concrete "steamship" bath house was constructed in 1999, replicating many of the earlier building's original marine elements and adapting them to a larger scale. Bathing pavilions continue to be built up to the present, such as the highly imaginative beach houses constructed in 2000 at Rainbow Beach Park, which feature translucent oval canopies suggestive of clouds.

History and Description of the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion

As early as 1895, Frederick Law Olmsted had envisioned a bathing beach and beach pavilion for Jackson Park. Swimming became increasingly popular after the 1899 completion of Chicago's innovative drainage canal which allowed for the diversion of sewage that had previously emptied into Lake Michigan. In 1914 a general plan for Jackson Park prepared by the South Park Commission's in-house designers called for a bathing beach extension and a bathing pavilion for the new beach. Following this general scheme, the South Park Commission in-house architects developed plans for a bathing pavilion in 1917. The ten-acre beach extension was filled between 1916 and 1917, although restrictions on building materials due to World War I delayed completion of the bathing pavilion until 1919. The bathing pavilion was first opened to the public on June 14, 1919. The total cost of the building according to the *American Architect* was $173,385.

The 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion is a long, rectangular building 460 feet in length and 145 feet in width. The building's walls are constructed entirely of poured aggregate porous concrete, giving the structure a feeling of great permanence and strength. Contemporary green tiles replicating the building's original roofing cover all roofs. The building is basically a symmetrical composition, with a central two-story mass flanked by two enclosed courtyards. The central block of the building consists of a two-story loggia with an open arched second story bracketed by twin towers. The loggia is detailed by classical pilasters on its park and beach elevations and is topped by a classical balustrade on its park elevation. Classically inspired brackets also appear on the building's beach elevation. A gable roof supported by an impressive open metal truss covers this portion of the building. The towers are detailed by Tuscan columns and are covered by pyramidal roofs with very wide eaves supported by wooden brackets suggestive of the Prairie style. Similar but slightly smaller towers flank the building's entrance on the park side.





Top: An aerial view of the 63rd Street Beach and Bathing Pavilion. Note the separate women's and men's changing booths in the building's two open courtyards. Bottom: A beachside view of the bathing pavilion taken in the 1940s.

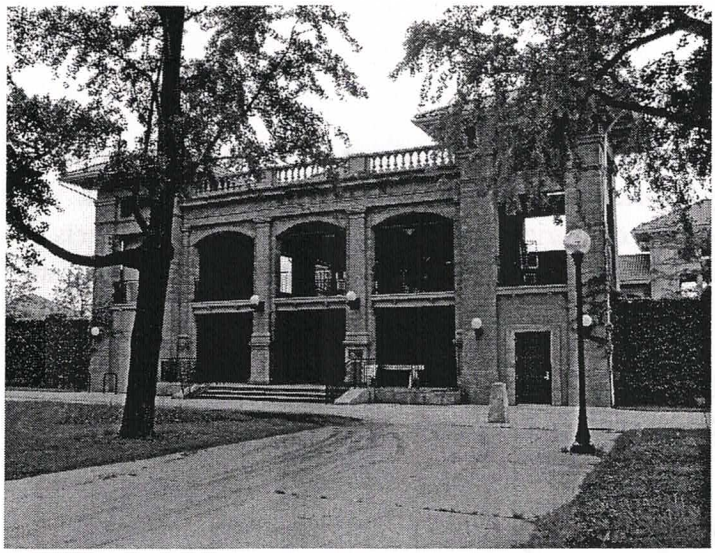
Open rectangular courtyards are located on both sides of the building's central mass. These spaces, enclosed by high walls, originally served as the changing locations and shower accommodations for bathers, one for men, the other for women, and included lockers and dressing rooms. These facilities could accommodate 2,044 women and 3,903 men. Today, these spaces are open, the south courtyard landscaped by turf, the north by a water fountain. The beachside wall of the courtyards still serves its original purpose as a long promenade overlooking Lake Michigan and includes its original ironwork railings. The four corners of the building terminate in square pavilions toped by pyramidal roofs with wide overhangs very similar to the building's higher central towers.

The inspiration for the design of the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion and many buildings in the constructed by the South Park Commission was largely Classical and came from the so-called "White City" buildings of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. The immense popularity of the Exposition and visual impact of its many large-scale buildings designed in the Classical tradition ensured that Classical architecture would become the standard dress for practically every city's major cultural commercial and municipal institutions virtually until the Depression. The 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion followed in this tradition. The in-house architectural staff of the South Park Commission was responsible for the design of the bathing pavilion, their design influenced by the Classical work of Daniel H. Burnham who had been in charge of architectural planning of the World's Columbian Exposition. The Prairie style is also, but more subtly suggested, in the design of the bathing pavilion by its long, horizontal proportions, square towers, and rooflines with wide, projecting eaves.

The building material used for the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion was a form of an exposed aggregate reinforced concrete which had become known as "popcorn concrete" or "marblecrete." It was an inexpensive material from which buildings could be constructed rapidly, and was used widely by the South Park Commission. (The material was also widely used for street lights, including the Park District's standard post top fixtures found throughout the parks.) Writing favorably of the material in a 1905 article, Henry Foreman, President of the Commission, noted that the material's surface finish of small particles of stone were visible, making the wall appear rough instead of "flat and meaningless." Because of the rough-cast character of the aggregate concrete, it required ornamental details be rendered in a simplified vocabulary, devoid of intricacies.

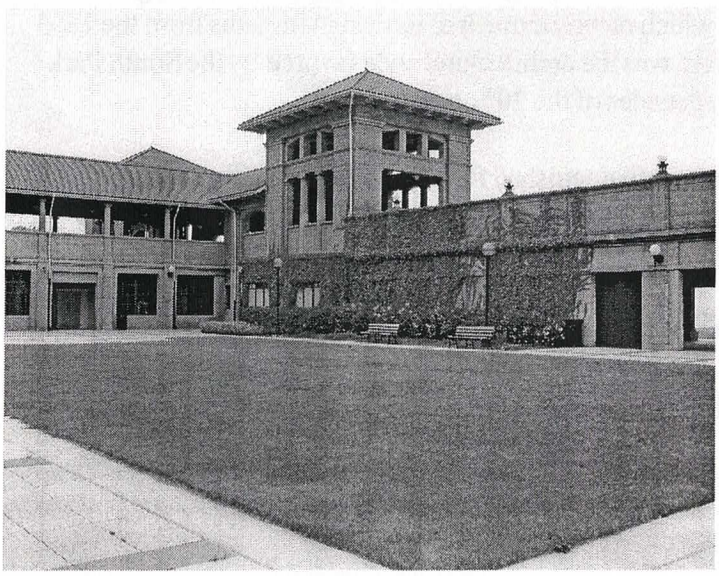
Later History

The 63rd Street Beach Bathing Pavilion suffered severe deterioration over the years until in the late 1990s when the Chicago Park District conducted a through $8 million restoration of the building. Most notably, this work included restoration of the building's original tile roof with appropriate replicate tiles and the installation of more compatable light fixtures. The building's large courtyards were restored as large open plazas, one with an interactive water fountain donated by the Max Schiff Foundation. The beach house is now once again used by beach patrons, boaters and day campers, and is also available for rental for other special events.



The commanding, Classically inspired loggia of the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion seen from the park side of the building.

From the beachside, the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion is one of the grandest of several Chicago Park District build ings that serve the City's Lake Michigan shoreline.



This open-air courtyard was formerly the location of swim-mer's lockers and changing booths.

Criteria for Designation

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2 120 620 and 630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History

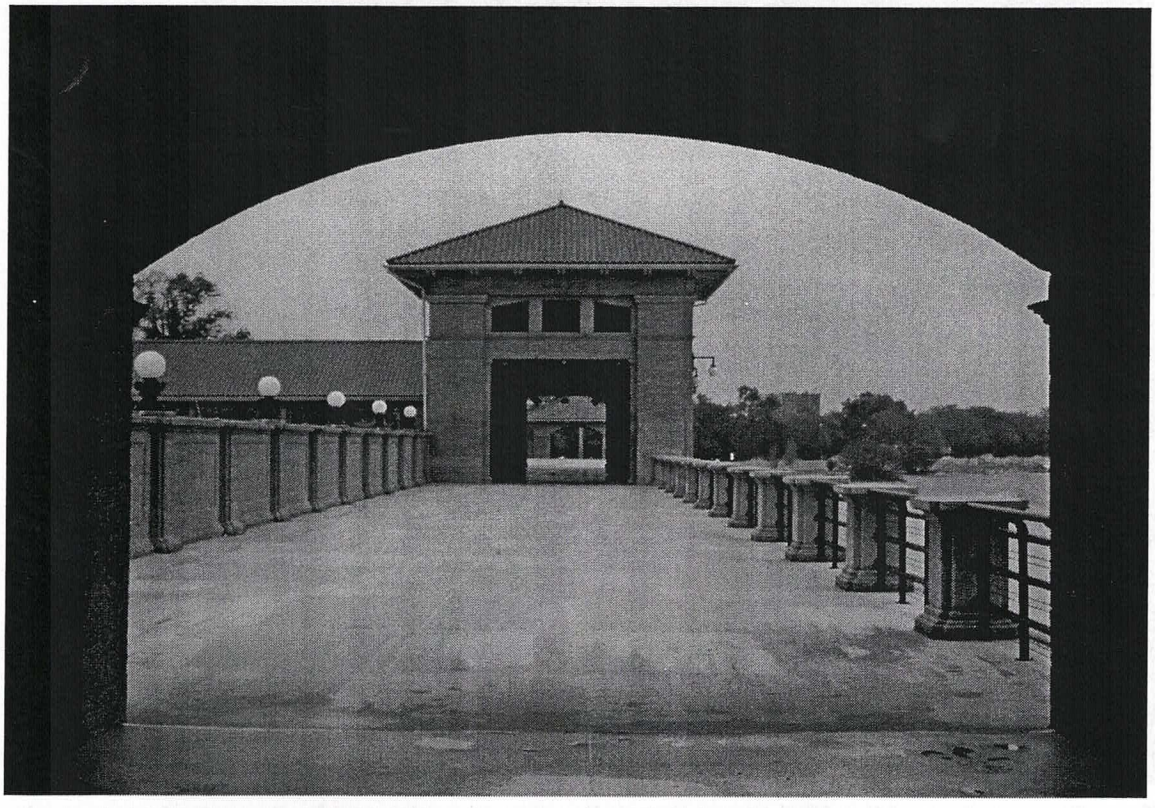
Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois or the United States.

- The 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion exemplifies the importance of Chicago's larger parks, built to satisfy the recreational needs of Chicago's growing population.
- The bathing pavilion reflects the increased interest in water sports beginning in the 19th century and the development of a new building type—the beach house—to serve the of the city's population engaged in beachfront recreational activities.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion exemplifies the influence of the Classical style in its design and is one of the most architecturally significant buildings in the Chicago Park District. The Classical style, which received much of its design impetus from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, was the architectural style favored by the South Park Commission during the early decades of the 20th century.
- The 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion is distinguished for its quality of detailing and craftsmanship in the Classical style, especially its use of the Tuscan order, Classical pilasters, brackets, and balustrade.
- The 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion is constructed of a an exposed aggregate reinforced concrete known as "popcorn concrete" or "marblecrete" which facilitated inexpensive and rapid construction and allowed the easy replication of details and ornament.



Top: An impressive open metal truss roof covers the bathing pavilion's two-story loggia.
Bottom: A long promenade runing the length of the building overlooks Lake Michigan.

Top: The grandeur of the 63rd Street Beach Pavilion is evidenced by its arched promenade and massive twin towers. Bottom: Classically inspired brackets ornament the pavilion's beachside.

Criterion 7: Unique Visual Feature

Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.

- A distinctive example of resort architecture in Chicago, the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion has a unique character that is immediately recognizable from South Lake Shore Drive and is an important visual landmark in the Woodlawn community. As restored, the building is again a grand lakeside amenity and a destination for Chicagoans participating in lakefront recreation.

Integrity Criteria

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.

The 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion possesses excellent physical integrity, displaying through its site, scale and overall design, its historic relationship to the Woodlawn community. The most significant changes to the building have been the removal of its former lockers and changing rooms from the building's open courtyards; however, these changes are not visible from the exterior of the structure, and these changes are appropriate alterations in the furtherance of the continued use of the building. In the late 1990s the building underwent a comprehensive and very sensitive restoration, strengthening its overall historic integrity.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based upon its preliminary evaluation of the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All exterior elevations of the building, including rooflines, the second-floor loggia with its open truss roof, and the building's two open courtyards.

Selected Bibliography

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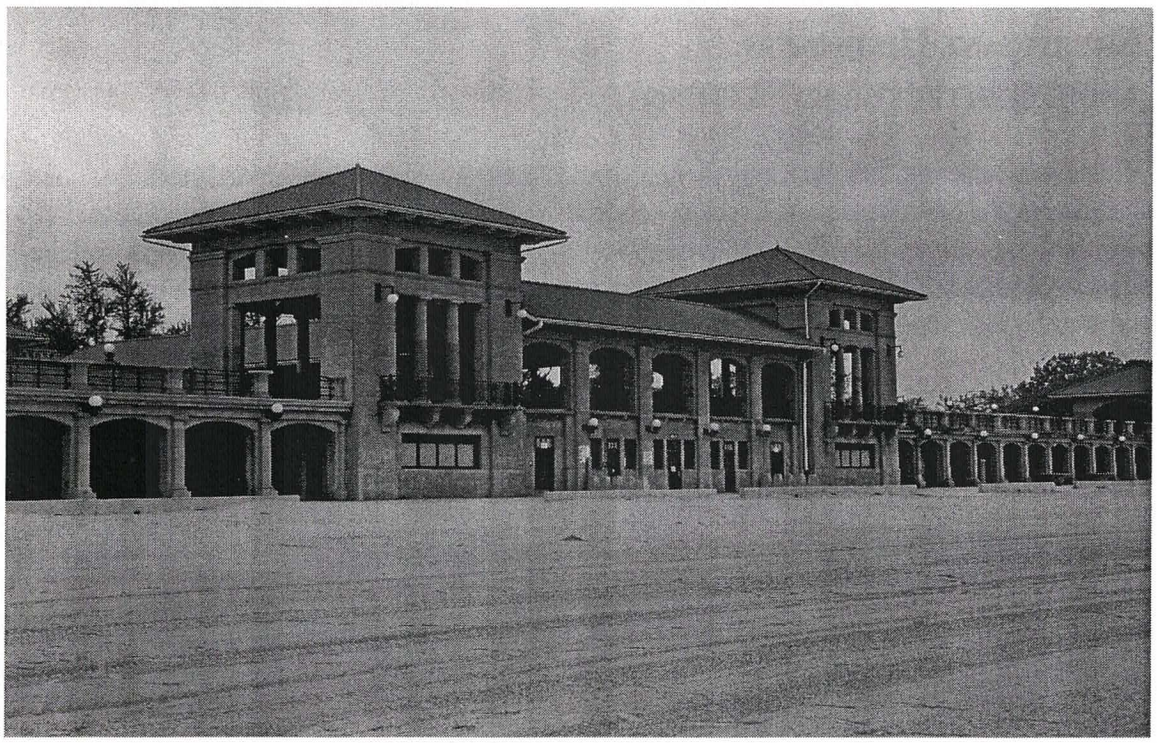

The impressive twin towers and central loggia of the 63rd Street Bathing Pavilion as seen from the Lake Michigan beachside.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Denise M. Casalino, P.E., Commissioner
Brian Goeken, Deputy Commissioner for Landmarks

Project Staff
Michael Zimny, research, writing, and photography
Margaret Klein and Michael Zimny, layout
Brian Goekin and Terry Tatum, editing

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Illustrations
Department of Planning and Development, Landmarks Division: pp.2 (bottom), 11, 13, 14, 16.
From Mayer and Wade, *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis*: p.4 (top), 6 (top).
From Sinkevitch, *AIA Guide to Chicago*: p.6 (middle and bottom).
From Lewis, *Everything Under One Roof:* p.4 (bottom).
From Graf, *Chicago's Parks*: p.7.
Chicago Park District, Special Collections: p.9.

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This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation proceedings. Only language contained within the City Council's final landmark lesignation ordinance should be regarded as final.

COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS

David Mosena, Chairman
John W. Baird, Secretary
Lisa Willis-Brown
Denise M. Casalino, P.E.
Phyllis Ellin
Michelle R. Obama
Seymour Persky
Ben Weese

The Commission is staffed by the
Chicago Department of Planning and Development
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